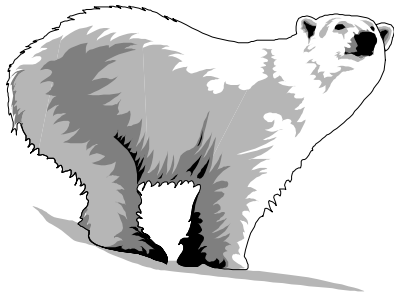
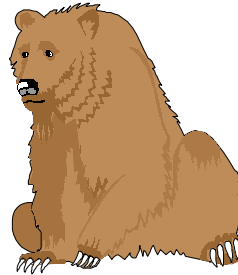


## Bears in Alaska



Black bear vary in color from black to brown, cinnamon, or blonde. They have distinct muzzles and stand 3 feet at the shoulder. They weigh from 125 to 600 lbs. Black bear have a tapered nose and short curved claws.

Grizzly bear vary from black to blonde, often with a silver-tipped appearance. They stand ~5 feet at the shoulder and 6-10 feet when standing. Adults average 350 lbs. but can weigh as much as 1100 lbs. Grizzlies have prominent humps over their shoulders and a dished or concave face.



Polar bear range in color from pure white to creamy yellow. They measure 3-6 feet at the shoulder and 7-12 feet when upright. An average male can weigh 1000 lbs; some reach 1500 lbs. They have an elongated body with a long neck and thick padded paws for swimming and walking on ice.

## Bear Quiz

1. What is a bear's keenest sense?
2. Can a bear run as fast as a human?
3. How can you tell if a bear has been in an area?
4. What is a bear's usual reaction when seeing humans?
5. What are the best locations for a bear-free campsite?
6. When are bears most dangerous to humans?
7. What two things attract bears?
8. How can you avoid encounters on the trail?
9. How should you store food in bear country?
10. When is it safe to approach a bear?



*Answers on a later page of the brochure.*

## Bear Behavior

- A bear standing on its hind legs usually only wants a better view and more information.
- On four legs, a bear may show agitation by swaying its head from side to side, making huffing noises, and clacking its teeth.
- Flattened ears and raised hairs on the back of the neck can be an indication of aggressive intent.
- If a bear runs with a stiff, bouncing gait, it may be false charging.
- Direct eye contact is often interpreted by a bear as a challenge or a threat.



*Alaska Public Lands  
Information Centers  
605 West 4th Avenue  
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# Bear Etiquette

- **Make your presence known; avoid surprises. Sing, talk, wear a bell. Avoid thick brush.**
- **Give bears plenty of room. Watch & photograph from a safe distance.**
- **Be on the watch for bear kills. A bear will defend its food. Detour areas where you see or smell dead animals or fish.**
- **Cook away from your tent. Keep a clean camp. Store your food in airtight containers away from the tent site.**

## Answers to Bear Quiz

1. Smell and hearing, although their eyes are as good as humans'.
2. Oh, yes! A bear can run up to 35 mph.
3. Look for pawprints, claw marks on trees, overturned rocks and logs, upturned soil, and scat (bear droppings).
4. A bear will leave the area. A bear doesn't want to encounter you any more than you want to encounter it.
5. In open areas away from trails or rivers. Set up tents in a straight line or semicircle to allow an exit for bears.
6. Bears are most dangerous when they become accustomed to humans and associate them with food.
7. Food and garbage.
8. Make noise when walking.
9. Hang food in a tree (or store food) at least 50 yards from your campsite. Keep cooking and garbage areas clean and away from your tent.
10. NEVER!

# Close Encounters

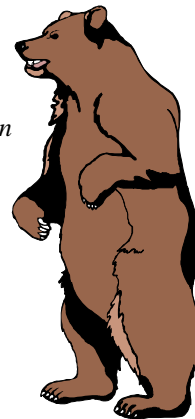
If you do encounter a bear at close distance, remain calm. Remember, bear attacks are rare.

**Identify Yourself.** Talk to the bear in a normal voice. Wave your arms to help the bear recognize you as a human being. The bear may come closer or stand to get a better look or smell. Back away slowly in a diagonal direction, but if the bear follows, stop and hold your ground.

**Resist the urge to run.** You cannot outrun a bear. Like dogs, a bear will instinctually chase a fleeing animal. Bears often make bluff charges to within 10 feet. Continue to wave your arms and talk to the bear. If the bear gets too close, raise your voice and be more aggressive. Bang pots and pans. Never imitate bear sounds or make squealing noises.

If a bear actually makes contact, **fall to the ground and play dead.** Lie flat on your stomach or curl up in a ball with your hands behind your neck. Remain motionless as long as possible. In rare instances, particularly with black bears, a bear may perceive a person as food. If the bear continues to bite long after you have assumed a defensive posture, fight back vigorously.

*From 1900-1985, only 20 people died in bear attacks in Alaska. From 1975-1985, 19 people in Alaska were killed by dogs.*



*text from the interagency Bear Facts brochure*

Public Lands Information Centers

# Alaska

## Bear Safety in Alaska



*All three species of North American bears thrive in Alaska. These magnificent creatures often share the wilderness with humans, whether humans are aware of them or not. Alaska is definitely bear country.*

*Respecting bears and learning proper behavior in their territory will ensure that any encounters will result in an interesting story or memory, rather than a tragic experience for either bear or human.*

*Bears remain a symbol of the early days of our country. Their presence reminds us how fortunate we are to still be able to experience areas of true wilderness and beauty.*

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